

ENTERTAINMENT FOR CONGRESSES

Survey of social programme providers in the Jyväskylä area

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<p>Abstract</p> <p>The commissioner of this thesis is Confedent International, a professional congress organiser operating in Jyväskylä and Helsinki. The aim of the thesis was to find out the supply of programme services and banqueting services offered in Jyväskylä and the surrounding area, and also, to study their suitability to a social programme for congresses. The purpose was to find new cooperators for the commissioner new ideas for free-time activities for their future congresses. The emphasis was on international congresses. Furthermore, general criteria were formed for the social programmes of congresses useful to all the congresses arranged in Finland.</p> <p>To find out the supply of the suitable companies, an electronic survey was made with the Digium Enterprise software for programme and banqueting service companies in the Jyväskylä area. The survey was sent to 254 companies and a response was received from 19 companies. According to the survey, there are many nature based activities, for example hiking, paddling and white water rafting, arranged in the area. A cultural programme, targeted for international groups, should be developed. The results also show that the capacity of most of the companies is not sufficient at the moment for congresses purposes.</p> <p>The survey reveals that four companies fulfill all the criteria, and recommendations were given to the commissioner. The rest of the companies were given suggestions on how they could develop their activities in case they want to organize a social programme for congresses in the future.</p>		
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<p>Tiivistelmä</p> <p>Opinnäytetyön toimeksiantaja oli Confedent International, Jyväskylässä ja Helsingissä toimiva kongressipalveluyritys. Työn tavoitteena oli kartoittaa Jyväskylässä ja ympäristöalueella toimivien yritysten ohjelma- ja juhlapalvelutarjontaa sekä selvittää näiden palveluiden soveltuvuutta kongressien vapaa-ajan ohjelmiksi. Tarkoituksena oli löytää toimeksiantajalle uusia yhteistyökumppaneita ja sitä kautta uusia ideoita oheisohjelmien järjestämiseen tuleviin kongresseihin. Työn painopiste oli kansainvälisillä kongresseilla. Lisäksi, kongressien vapaa-ajan ohjelmille muodostettiin yleispätevät kriteerit, joita voidaan soveltaa yleisesti kaikkialla Suomessa järjestettäviin kongresseihin.</p> <p>Tavoitteen saavuttamiseksi ja soveltuvien yritysten löytämiseksi tehtiin elektroninen kysely Jyväskylässä ja ympäristössä toimiville ohjelma- ja juhlapalveluyrityksille. Kysely toteutettiin DigiumEnterprise -ohjelmalla. Kysely lähetettiin 254:lle yritykselle, joista 19 vastasi kyselyyn.</p> <p>Tulosten perusteella Jyväskylän alueella on paljon tarjontaa luonnossa järjestettävistä aktiviteeteista, kuten luontoretkestä, melonnasta ja koskenlaskusta. Kulttuuriohjelmaa, joka soveltuu kansainvälisille ryhmille sen sijaan pitäisi kehittää. Yrityksistä suurimman osan kapasiteetti ei myöskään ole riittävä kongressien tarpeisiin tällä hetkellä.</p> <p>Kyselyn perusteella löydettiin neljä kriteeriä täyttävää yritystä, joista annettiin suositukset toimeksiantajalle. Lopuille yrityksistä annettiin kehitysehdotuksia, jos he haluavat toimia kongressimarkkinoilla tulevaisuudessa.</p>		
Avainsanat (asiasanat) kongressi, kokous, konferenssi, vapaa-ajanohjelma, oheisohjelma, sosiaalinen ohjelma, ohjelmapalveluyritys, tapahtuman järjestäminen		
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1 Aim of the thesis

The commissioner of this thesis is Confedent International, Jyväskylä Events, a professional congress organizer (PCO) operating in Jyväskylä and Helsinki.

After completing a five- month-long internship in Jyväskylä Events the author decided to write a thesis about congress organizing. The subject came from congress manager Pirjo-Leena Pitkänen. She thought that there is a need for new ideas concerning social programmes of congresses held in Jyväskylä. The same programme service producers are used in most of the congresses, because they are known to be of good quality.

There is also a lack of knowledge about the programme service companies operating in the Jyväskylä area. There are a lot of smaller companies that might be interested in the business, but the companies are probably not aware of the requirements regarding social programmes of congresses.

The aim of the thesis was to find companies interested in organizing social programmes for congresses in the Jyväskylä area. Furthermore, the companies would have to fulfill the criteria for organizing programmes for congresses. The criteria were found out based on both literature and interviewing professionals of the congress business. The theory part of the thesis is a base for the interviews.

The theory part defines the role of a social programme in a congress, from the point of view of the organizing institution, the participant and the host city. Some theory about events management is introduced because a social programme consists of different types of events. The characteristics of services help to understand what is required of a successful event. International congresses are dealt with separately because there are a lot them organized in Jyväskylä. Also, they have many special requirements. Different types of programme services are analyzed to find the suitable companies as research subjects.

This thesis is beneficial first and foremost to the commissioner, Jyväskylä Events. They find programme service providers that they can cooperate with. The quality of their future congresses will be better. This thesis is beneficial not only for the commissioner but also for congress organizers, PCOs and programme service companies in general. A study of the criteria set for a social programme of congresses does not exist but there is a need for it. Programme service providers have a chance to get new customers. They will also know what is expected of them if they want to organize programmes for congresses.

The research part of the thesis is targeted to the programme service companies and meeting and banqueting service providers in the Jyväskylä area. The research data was gathered by an electronic questionnaire sent to the respondents by email. The questionnaire tried to assess whether a particular company is suitable for organizing programmes for congresses.

2 What are congresses?

2.1 Definition of a congress

Tourism sector can be divided into leisure and business tourism. Business tourism on the other hand consists of five sectors: exhibitions and trade fairs, incentive travel, corporate events/hospitality, individual business travel and conferences and conventions. (Rogers 2001, 20.)

The reasons to organise a congress are diverse. A car manufacturer may want to arrange a congress to launch a new car model. An association of professionals sees a need for a congress to exchange information and ideas in their field. Other purposes

can be for example to provide information about product or a company, bring people together outside the office setting, find solutions to existing problems, provide training and give sales recognition. (Allen 2000, 4-5.) The reasons to organise a congress vary according to the type of the organising institution and whether a congress is an association or a corporate event.

IAPCO (International Association of Professional Congress Organisers) has defined the terms congress, conference and meeting as follows. The definitions show that a lot of overlapping between the terms exists. The reason is that the terminology related to congresses is not totally established yet. The term congress is used in this thesis to mean also conferences and meetings.

Conference:

“Participatory meeting designed for discussion, fact-finding, problem solving and consultation. As compared with a congress, a conference is normally smaller in scale and more select in character – features which tend to facilitate the exchange of information. The term “conference” carries no special connotation as to frequency. Though not inherently limited in time, conferences are usually of limited duration with specific objectives.”

Congress:

“Regular coming together on a representational basis of several hundreds -or even thousands – or individuals belonging to a single professional, cultural, religious or other group. Congress is often convened to discuss a particular subject. Contributions to the presentation and discussion of the subject matter come only from members of the organising body. Frequency: usually established in advance and can be either multiannual or annual. Most international or world congresses are of the former type while national congresses are more frequently held annually. A congress will often last several days and have several simultaneous sessions.”

Meeting:

“General term indicating the coming together of a number of people in one place, to confer or carry out a particular activity. Frequency: can be on an ad hoc basis or according to a set pattern, as for instance annual general meetings, committee meetings, etc.”

2.2 Congresses are made of services: core, auxiliary and optional services

Congresses consist of different types of services. *Core business* is the main reason to organise a congress. Core business in a congress means the scientific programme or official programme. The organiser arranges the event, and the participant attends mainly due to the scientific programme. The main message and value that the organiser wants to deliver to the participant is mediated by the scientific programme. In addition to core services, there are many other services related to organising a congress. The delegates need food, a place to sleep and transportation to the congress site. These, usually physical services, are called *auxiliary services* and they are necessary for the realisation of the event. A social programme, on the other hand, belongs to the *optional services*. The optional services are organised because they bring some other value to the delegate, e.g. social value. Auxiliary and optional services are designed to support the core services in a congress. (Blinnikka & Kuha 2004, 97.)

3 Social programme

Congresses are not usually strictly business events, and a social programme is an important part of the congress programme. A social programme can consist of many

different types of events: pre- and post congress tours, civic reception, welcoming get-togethers, opening parties, accompanying person programmes, gala dinners and excursions. Some items typical of social programmes are described below.

Pre- and post congress tours are trips organised a couple of days before or after the congress. The destination is usually somewhere in the congress country or in a neighbouring country. Pre- and post congress tours give the participants a chance to get to know the surrounding area and combine a holiday with a congress trip. Saint Petersburg in Russia is a popular pre- and post tour destination for Finnish congresses. (Aarresjärvi 2003, 106-107.)

A civic reception is organised by the destination city. The tradition has been that a city representative welcomes the visitors. The occasion is a way for the city to thank the participants and the organisers for their attendance. Congresses bring fame and financial benefits to the city. (Aarresjärvi 2003, 99.)

An opening party is an occasion that is arranged either at the beginning of the first congress day or at the previous afternoon. Opening party is a festive event. The president of the organising committee opens up the ceremony and after that the representatives of local host committee and international organisation may give speeches. The programme usually includes a buffet style dinner and performances. (Aarresjärvi 2003, 97-98.)

A welcoming get-together is arranged at the beginning of the congress, usually in the evening after the first congress day. It is an important occasion in a way that it creates the atmosphere for the rest of the congress. A representative of the organiser should welcome the participants to the congress and the congress city. Usually the food served is buffet-style. The programme can include e.g. musical performances. (Aarresjärvi 2003, 98-99.)

An accompanying person programme is designed to entertain the partners of the participants and, in some cases, their families. The programme happens during the day while the scientific programme of the congress is in progress. Especially in the association sector, the partners often attend the congresses.

4 Events management and congresses

4.1 Congresses as events

Congresses are special events and therefore they are here looked at from events management point of view. Actually, congresses are a series of events following each other. First, different definitions of events are introduced and thought about.

”Special events are: That phenomenon arising from those non-routine occasions which have leisure, cultural, personal or organisational objectives set apart from the normal activity of daily life, whose purpose is to enlighten, celebrate, entertain or challenge the experience of a group of people.” (Parry & Shone 2004, 3.)

Authors such as Goldblatt (2001) highlight the celebratory aspect of events: “A special event recognises a unique moment in time with ceremony and ritual to satisfy specific needs.”(Parry & Shone 2004, 3.)

Gets (1997) in referring to the experience that participants have, states: “To the customer...a special event is an opportunity for leisure, social or cultural experience outside the normal range of choices or beyond everyday experience. “(Parry & Shone 2004, 3.)

The first definition by Shone applies very well to congresses. Congresses have organisational objectives from the part of the organising company or association. For the participants the objectives can be cultural, leisure or personal. Congresses are also non-routine occasions. An aspect that is missing from the definition is that congresses are educational first and foremost. The definition of Goldblatt, highlighting the celebratory aspects is more suitable for events like weddings or graduations although congresses often have celebratory elements too.

4.2 Congresses are made of services

Congresses have common characteristics that are typical for all types of services in particular within hospitality and leisure industry. Uniqueness, perishability, ambience and service, labour-intensive, fixed time scale, intangible, ritual or ceremony and personal interactions are characteristics of events. The characteristics and their relation to congresses are explained below.

Uniqueness means that every event is unique. The participants, the surroundings and the audience are different every time which makes the event unique. Certain types of events do recur like an annual congress. The structure is the same, but the programme and the participants are always different. (Parry & Shone 2004, 13-18.)

If events are unique they are extremely *perishable*. They cannot be repeated in the exact same way. Perishability means also that a service cannot be stored. For example if a congress room is not rented for a particular day, the revenue from that day will be lost forever. (Parry & Shone 2004, 13-18.)

Events are something that you cannot touch which makes them *intangible*. There are still tangible items related to events like brochures, a guest list or a chocolate that people can take as souvenirs. (Parry & Shone 2004, 13-18.)

Some modern events rely on old *traditions or ceremonies* even though the original meaning has been forgotten. New traditions and ceremonies are also created.. For example annual congresses can have traditions that are repeated in every congress. (Parry & Shone 2004, 13-18.)

Of all of the characteristics of events *ambience* is one of the most important. Decorations, music, games, food and drink help to create the right ambience. It cannot be guaranteed, however, as finally people make the ambience. They cannot be forced to enjoy themselves even if the setting is right. (Parry & Shone 2004, 13-18.)

Personal contact and interaction means that the participants are part of the process. They are interacting with each other, with the staff and with entertainers. This interaction creates the atmosphere and defines the success of the event. (Parry & Shone 2004, 13-18.)

In terms of organisation and operation events are *labour-intensive*. The complexity of the event adds to the labour intensiveness. A lot of communication is required between the event manager and organiser even if the event is repeating a formula like a conference. (Parry & Shone 2004, 13-18.)

Events run a *fixed time-scale*. The planning phase can take several years, but the event itself has predetermined beginning and end. For an event to be successful, it should hold people's attention and interest and it is preferably broken up into separate sections. (Parry & Shone 2004, 13-18.)

4.3 Venue

The selection of a location is of primary importance for any event. Traditional venues are hotels, convention centres and restaurants. More special options could be museums, art galleries, theatres, private estate homes, heritage buildings, exclusive restaurants, airport hangers, yacht clubs, race tracks, local attractions, exclusive night clubs, skating rinks, enclosed tennis courts, indoor volleyball facilities, golf clubs, retail stores, aquariums, converted warehouses, armouries, film studios and boat charters. (Allen 2000, 49.)

A criteria concerning the venue is the travelling time from the congress site. It cannot be too long. The distance of the venue should be 50 kilometres at most (Blinnikka & Kuha 2004, 156). Social programmes are often arranged in the evening, after the official programme, usually between 3 pm and 5 pm. Preparation time for the participants has to be taken into consideration. The return back to the hotel cannot be too late either regarding the next congress day starting in the morning.

Size of the space has to be suitable for the congress participants group. The size of a group may vary from 30 people to a 3000 people group. A group of 3000 people sets limitations for the location options. Other things that affect the space needed are whether there is a sit down dinner in the programme, whether there has to be room for a band or for a dance floor, whether the programme is such that the whole group has to stay together and whether there have to be dressing rooms for the entertainers or for the staff. (Allen 2000, 43-45.)

Site visit is useful to see the quality of the venue. The organiser must have an idea of the requirements of the particular event when going to the visit. First impression is important, because the impression that the organiser gets is most likely the same that the participant gets. What does the site look like? How about the surroundings? What

can be heard and smelled?(Parry & Shone 2004, 123.) Site visit also gives an opportunity to see the staff of the venue and evaluate their professionalism.

4.4 Budget

The budget of a congress is very important as for any event. The budget of the congress includes a budget for the social programme.

Events can be either cost oriented or income oriented. In corporate sector congresses, the budget is cost oriented and is realized within the budget set by the company. The budget is required to cover delegate expenses, as well as costs of planning, promoting and staging the event. In association sector, on the other hand, the organisers want to generate some profit which makes them income oriented. They use participation fees, to cover the costs. (Rogers 2003, 149-150.)

To make the social programme attractive, the price has to be right. The expenses of social programme are formed partly prior to the congress, made by planning of the programme and partly during the congress, consisting for example of entertainer fees and programme service providers' fees. Prior to the congress -expenses are fixed costs and during the congress -costs are partly fixed costs and partly variable costs. (Blinnikka & Kuha 2004, 70-71.) Variable cost is for example a dinner which is charged according to the number of people actually attending. Fixed cost is for instance a venue hire. They do not depend of the amount of participants.

An important issue for event organiser is to know how many people will attend in the social programme in order to prepare an accurate budget. The estimates of attendance can be made by looking at the attendance in previous or similar events, knowledge of the size of available customer base or based on surveys of the market. If a congress

has been arranged before, the previous attendance numbers can provide an estimate. It has to be noted that if the event was arranged in a different city or different country in the past, the customer base is not necessarily the same in the next location. (Parry & Shone 2004, 103.)

When planning the social programme, the budget must be kept in mind. If the budget is not big, the most expensive ideas cannot be considered. If a congress has been arranged before, the previous budget can be used to estimate the right cost and quality for the social programme. It is not recommended that the quality is changed a lot, because the participants have expectations based on the previous congress and they will be disappointed if the expectations are not met. (Aarresjärvi 2003, 29-30.)

Using sponsorship is a mean to generate income for the congress. The city is usually willing to assist in social programme costs by offering a civic reception in their premises. Running an exhibition alongside a congress is a way to generate money for the congress. (Rogers 2003, 149-150.)

4.5 Participants

A successful event is created by knowing the characteristics, wants and needs of the participants. Generalisations can be made by examining the average characteristics of the participants.

According to Kongressitutkimus 2001, a study made by Finland Convention Bureau, congress participants are generally well educated, have plenty of travelling experience and have more money to spend than an average tourist. Therefore, it can be assumed that they expect high quality of the services, which makes them a demanding customer group. A typical congress delegate arriving in Finland comes from Europe and is aged

31 to 50 years. Males form the majority of the participants but the proportion of females has grown over the last years. Aarresjärvi says that despite the image that usually comes from tourism officials, the international congress participants are people with average wages. Bringing an accompanying person to the congress is a noticeable cost to them (Aarresjärvi 2003, 103). (Blinnikka & Kuha 2004, 28.)

Every congress has a different delegate group despite the generalizations made earlier. The whole event and the social programme should always be planned according to the type of the participant group. If there are many different types of delegates in one congress, such as students and senior experts, it can be hard to plan the social programme to be suitable to everybody (Blinnikka & Kuha 2004, 43).

5 Role of social programme

5.1 Participants' point of view

For the participant, a social programme is the fun part of the programme. A social programme, from a participant's point of view, is an opportunity to relax, make new friends and get to know the colleagues. For international congress guests, a congress trip is often a combined leisure and business trip, and it is important to them to get to know and experience the destination culture. (Rogers 2003, 162). Social programme can be seen as a reward for the participant provided by the employer (Blinnikka & Kuha 2004, 35). Social programme provides an opportunity for informal networking, doing business and socialising (Rogers 2003, 142.)

To understand the role of the social programme in a congress from the participants' point of view, it is important to think about why a person attends to a congress. In some cases, it is their obligation to participate, caused by their professional position,

and in other cases it is a voluntary choice. The goals of the scientific programme are important for the participant from a professional viewpoint. From the personal point of view, the social programme may be even more important. However, a social programme also offers a possibility for forming professionally beneficial networks with colleagues. The expectations can be making new friends, identifying with a community and getting away from everyday life and getting to know different cultures (Blinnikka & Kuha 2004, 36).

5.2 *Organiser's point of view*

A social programme plays an important role in the image that stays in the congress participants' minds after the congress trip. For the organiser, the leisure programme is an opportunity to display creativity and bring flair to the congress (Rogers 2003, 162). International congresses competing for participants, put thought, effort and money to the social programmes. When looking at international congresses arranged last year, the social programme seems more impressive than in the Finnish congresses. Especially for the international congress participants, getting to know the destination culture is very important, which the organiser should bear in mind. A well planned social programme is a benefit to the organiser because it will bring more participants to the congress. Also, the organising institution will get appreciation from the participants and the professional community when the social programme is a success. A social programme is also a way for the organising institution to thank the participants for coming and show that they are appreciated.

5.3 *Host city's point of view*

The countries and cities in the world compete for opportunities to be hosts of congresses, both national and international. A congress brings noticeable financial benefits for the city and especially for the city's hospitality industry. The delegates leave money for the hotels, restaurants and other service providers like taxi. Congress tourism caters for high quality high cost and therefore high yield end of the market. The greater spending power of business tourists means greater economic benefits for the host destination and greater return on investment in infrastructure and marketing. Social programme is an opportunity for the city to show its most attractive and scenic parts. It can also show the possibilities for leisure activities. It is in the city's interest to support the congress organisation and social programmes because many businesses like programme service companies get customers through congresses. A city that is capable of hosting a congress in a successful way will get acknowledged in the media. The benefits can be seen in the long term, the congress participants return to the city for a leisure trip and the fame gained can bring other tourists to the destination. A successful congress is likely to attract congresses in the future. To show the appreciation for the congress delegates, the city is usually willing to arrange a reception for the participants in the city's property. (Rogers 2003, 23-24.)

6 International congresses

6.1 *Definitions*

There are numerous ways to define an international meeting. The professional Convention Management Association (PCMA) regards an international meeting as synonymous with "any event that has participants from three or more countries". International Association of Professional Congress Organisers in its publication

Meeting Industry Terminology (2000a) refer to international meetings as “meetings of an organisation with multi-national membership that is available to meet in more than one continent”. The International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) defines international meetings by the number of countries in which an organisation hosts its meetings. Accordingly, a sponsor’s meeting must be rotated among a minimum of three different countries on a regular bases. The definitions are important particularly when interpreting statistical data that describe the market. (Chon & Weber 2002, 120-121.)

The reasons to stage international meetings are plenty. Foreign destinations are a prestige factor for the participants. They can combine a holiday with a business trip. Businesses have operations internationally and meetings are necessary to exchange information and make business deals. Associations gain international participants to their congresses and are able to expand their member base. (Chon & Weber 2002, 122.)

6.2 Cultural considerations

Planning activities for an international meeting, the cultural backgrounds of attendees have to be taken into consideration. For example people from the Mediterranean countries prefer to eat dinner rather late. They also spend more time at lunch like the South Americans. Speeches and business presentations over meal may be regarded as offensive in some cultures. Furthermore, the concept of punctuality varies in different parts of the world which has to be taken into consideration in the schedule. (Chon & Weber 2002, 135.)

The programme service provider and especially the activity guides that are directly in contact with the customers have to be familiar with the cultures of the attendees. It is

important to be aware of the religions or any special diets in order not to offend or embarrass the participants. (Lackman & Verhelä 2003, 205.)

6.3 *Providing experiences for international quests*

International congress participants want to experience the destination culture. Judgement should be used, though, because some experiences can be too exotic and upsetting to the participant. For example, the guests should not be taken to sauna the first thing when they arrive to Finland and going to the middle of the forest may be scary for some of the participants. (Aarresjärvi 2003, 48.)

A social programme planned for an international congress participant group requires that the programme is offered in languages that the participants understand. The required language depends on the official languages of the congress. Usually the minimum language is English. In some congresses Spanish, for example, may be more important. Also, interpreters can be used. It is of great importance that the delegates understand the directions given to them.

7 Programme services

7.1 *Different types of programme services*

Programme services are divided into seven categories.

- adventure based programme services

- nature based programme services
- physical exercise based programme services
- health and wellness based programme services
- cultural programme services
- food based programme services
- tradition based programme services (Lackman & Verhelä 2003, 94.)

7.2 Quality of programme services

The quality of a programme service is based, as in all the services, on the experienced quality of a customer. The experience is formed in the mind of the participant. The definition of quality is therefore difficult. In addition to the actual service, the things that affect the experience are e.g. the background of the client, timetable, emotions, other customers and weather. These are not easily affected by the programme service provider.

The three dimensions of quality are *technical quality*, *functional quality* and *interactive quality*. In the case of programme services, technical quality means the equipment and machines used in the realisation of the service. Also, the surroundings, such as buildings and scenery, belong to technical quality. Functional quality consists of things such as how the customer is treated during the service, which things are emphasised in the service encounter, in which way the customer can interact with other customers, how the customer can function during the service and what is the technical knowledge of the staff like. Interactive quality is made by the staff and how they succeed in recognising the needs of the client. It is affected by the motivation of the staff, their behaviour, communication with the customers and each other, the level of their service orientation, friendliness, clothing and the use of language. (Lackman & Verhelä 2003, 40-42.)

8 Interviews

Three professionals of congress business were interviewed for this thesis. One of the interviews was made in person and the other two by telephone. The interviews were semi-structured. A questionnaire was used as a frame, but also other issues that came up during the interview were discussed. The interviewees were Pirjo-Leena Pitkänen, a congress manager from Confedent International, Ella Kuula, convention director of Tampere Convention Bureau and Eija Pajunen, project manager of Alandica Kultur och Kongress. The interviews were made to find out the things that are required of a social programme of a congress. The criteria for the companies providing the services and for the programme itself were investigated. The interviews were used as a base for the research that was made for the programme service companies. The main conclusions from the interviews are discussed below.

The interviewees were asked about the suitable distance from the congress site to the social programme site. The purpose was to find out the maximum travelling time and the maximum distance. The travelling time was by bus as that is the usual way of travelling for the congress group. The interviewees stated that the distance from the congress site is one of the most important criteria for the social programme.

According to Pirjo-Leena Pitkänen, the distance can be 60 kilometers at the most or one hour by bus. Ella Kuula thinks that half an hour by buss is a suitable distance from the congress site. The interview results are in line with the theory part that the distance from the congress site should be 50 kilometers maximum..

The next question of the interview was used to find out the requirements that the interviewees set for the site of the congress programme: the quality of the premises, existing facilities, type of the surroundings and size of the premises. The interviewees answered that the sites have to be suitable to international quests. This means proper toilet facilities and that the spaces in general have to be tidy and presentable. The spaces for international congresses have to cater for at least 200-300

people that being the normal size of an international congress. Sometimes it is possible to split up the group, especially in activity based programmes, when only part of the participants take part. Then, the minimum group size is around 30 people. In Ahvenanmaa, for example, it is difficult to find a programme that enables several hundred people to stay together, says Eija Pajunen. The solution is that the group is divided and separate activities are arranged at the same time. If the programme is a gala dinner or a theme evening, the whole group has to stay together. For a gala dinner, there has to be a catering possibility and a complete dinner should be arranged. According to the interviews, a possibility to visit the site in advance is important. Some conclusions about the quality can be drawn from the way that the companies give their quotations and what their websites look like, says Pirjo-Leena Pitkänen. If they are made in a professional manner, it is more likely that the service is also professional.

To find out the most important criteria for the congress organiser, the interviewees were asked about the most important factor that leads to the selection of a particular programme service provider. Whether it is e.g. the price or the experience. One of the most important things for all of the interviewees when selecting the programme service providers were previous experiences of the companies, whether they had organized similar events successfully in the past. Also recommendations by other people are also considered very important.

The interviewees were asked about the price range of their social programmes to conclude the criteria for a suitable price of a social programme item. According to the interview results, programmes of different price categories are needed. Eija Pajunen said that there are programmes with a wide price range from 10 euros per person to 200 euros per person. According to her, the price is not the most important determinant for the organizer. The most expensive programme item that they have is the windjammer programme. Ella Kuula thought that 50 euros per person is a normal price range for a social programme of a congress. Pirjo-Leena Pitkänen said that the

budgets of the congresses are usually tight in the association sector, and therefore the price cannot be too high. This does not apply to corporate events, however. If the price for an item of a social programme is separately charged, the price will be high for the participant due to VAT, she said.

The interviewees were also asked about the most common times of the year that congresses are arranged in Finland. The question was asked because the social programme provider has to be able to provide the programmes during that time. For example, if there are programmes that are arranged only during winter, they are not suitable to summer congresses. The interviews revealed that the high season for congresses in Finland is the summer. Especially April, May, June, August and September are busy months for congress business. Few international congresses are arranged in Finland during the wintertime. If there are any, they are conducted in Finnish only.

As stated in the theory part, the congress schedules are usually tight. Next question of the interview was asked to find out the time required for a social programme. The answers were as follows: The programmes are needed for a half-day excursions, afternoons and evening programmes. According to the interviews, the maximum length is half a day.

The interviewees were also asked about the criteria for the content and theme of the programme. The purpose was to find out which kinds of programme themes are suitable and what the programme should include. Pitkänen says that the social programme has to be genuine and authentic. It has to show local culture, e.g. in the form of food and music. In Jyväskylä, the programme should contain something typical of central Finland. For example a Lapland theme is not good in Jyväskylä. At a Finnish congress, the aim is to get to know the supply of one's own professional field, said Pirjo-Leena Pitkänen. Also a basic evening out in a restaurant is an option that is not worth while for an international group, she added. Eija Pajunen said that in a

scientific congress the programme choices cannot be too courageous, because people come there to work. She also said that Finnish people have high expectations of quality. Therefore, it is difficult to think of something special for them. Usually the programmes include some extreme activities. It has to be remembered that not all people like doing extreme things, and no one should be put to an uncomfortable situation, she said. Eija Pajunen thought that the theme has to have something to do with milieu and be unique. She emphasised the fact that the host or the hostess often makes or breaks the programme. A programme that may not seem very interesting on paper, can be great if the host is enthusiastic and gets the participants involved. For people that come from far away, simple things are exotic, she added. For a Japanese person just going to the forest can be an experience. According to Pajunen, successful events can be built around a certain product. For example in a Tjudö vineyard in Åland, the product is built around making wine from the farm's own fruits and berries. Also, the opportunity that has not been used in Finland much is home hospitality where the participants have a chance to visit a private Finnish home. According to Ella Kuula, the most important requirements of the content of the programme is that it is a unique experience, memorable, has to do with Finnish nature, food culture and social interaction.

The purpose of the next question was to find out if there are special requirements for the social programme of congresses of different subject fields. All the interviewees agree that the subject of the congress itself has little impact on the social programme in an international congress. The values of the organiser have some impact, says Eija Pajunen. Ella Kuula says that for example a congress of biologists wants to stay outside and a congress of ministers may want to visit Tuomiokirkko. The organisers may have traditions from previous congresses that they want to follow depending on the field of the congress.

The focus of the thesis is on international congresses. The purpose of the next question was to find out if there are special criteria for international congresses. When

asked about special requirements for international congresses, interviews confirm the fact that was already thought about in the theory part that the cultures of the participants have to be taken into careful consideration. In international congresses special attention has to be put to the planning of the menu, says Ella Kuula. For example Muslims and Jewish people have food related restrictions. Eija Pajunen says that in some cultures it is not common to dance with strangers and that is why a traditional Finnish dancing night may not be suitable. Thing that often causes problems, based on the interviews, is that participants do not have the right clothes for the activities. The programme service provider should therefore arrange the equipment needed.

The congress professionals were asked about language skills that are needed from a service provider and what kind of problems language has created. The target was to create a criteria for the language skills and to determine in which languages the programme should be provided. English is the required language for the programme service providers, according to the interviews. Otherwise, the opinions about the language were controversial. Ella Kuula says that the language (English) hasn't been a problem with the programme service providers. According to Pirjo-Leena, language is often a limitation. For instance, there is not a lot of cultural programme offered in English in summertime. Eija Pajunen emphasizes that it is not enough that the programme is translated into English, but it also has to be explained for an international group. She mentions as an example that a Viking-themed programme, that they are offering, does not open to people outside Scandinavia automatically and the story of Vikings has to be explained thoroughly for the participants

9 Criteria

The criteria for a social programme of congresses is concluded from the interviews and theory part. There are general criteria that apply for all types of programmes and criteria that are specific for banqueting services or programme services.

General criteria

- The surroundings and the facilities of the social programme site has to be of good quality
- There have to be proper toilet facilities
- The distance from Jyväskylä should be 60 kilometres at most or the travelling time should be 30 minutes at most
- The cost per person should be from 10 to 200 Euros per person
- The service should be arranged between April and September
- The service should contain something Finnish or local culture
- The service should be unique and special
- The company should have experience in serving similar groups (international groups)

Criteria for banqueting services

- The company has to offer dinner service (either a table-service or a buffet-style)
- The premises should cater at least for 200-300 people
- The company should have licence to serve alcoholic beverages

Criteria for programme service companies

- Activity based programmes should cater for at least 30 people

- The length of the programme should be half-day, evening or afternoon (max. five hours)
- The programme should be performed in English and it should be able to be adapted and explained for people from different cultures
- The programme service company should offer the equipment needed for the programme
- The programme should be of good quality

10 Research methods

The surveyed companies included programme service companies, rural tourism companies and companies providing meeting and banqueting halls. The cities and communities included in the research were Jyväskylä, Saarijärvi, Äänekoski, Uurainen, Konnevesi, Laukaa, Hankasalmi, Kangasniemi, Toivakka, Muurame, Joutsa, Luhanka, Jämsä, Multia, Keuruu and Petäjävesi. The communities are selected based on the distance from Jyväskylä, which is about 60 km at most.

The research was qualitative. It contained multiple choice questions and open-ended questions, both numeral and textual, as well as hierarchy based questions. The research contained 39 questions. Some questions were not asked from all of the participants and in the case of some questions, there was a precondition that the participant had answered in a certain way to a previous question. Multiple choice questions and numeral open-ended question provide an opportunity select participants according to a set condition. There were also open ended questions where the respondents could tell freely about their services.

The research was made with Digium Enterprise, a software that is used for making online researches, gathering information and reporting. Responding for the research

was made online. The respondents were invited to answer the research by sending them an invitation by e-mail. E-mail contained a cover letter explaining the purpose of the research and instructions, and a link that led a respondent directly to the questionnaire. An invitation was sent to 254 companies. The list of companies and their contact information were gathered from the internet by using the tourism sites of cities and communities as a source. Also, a site called Travelnet was used to get a list of companies' contact information.

11 The research results

11.1 Summary of the basic information of the companies

There were 19 companies that answered the questionnaire. The names of the companies are: Hankala offroad/kartanoravintola Hankala, Killerin Liikuntakeskus, Rhea Ship Line Oy/Ravintolaliva m/s Rhea, Kievari Rantapirtti, Simulaattorimailma Oy, Erä Pohjola, Kylpylähotelli Peurunka, Elämysten ja Ystävyyden kartano Oy, Erä's Pete, Kokemuskauppa Oy, Tavinsulka Oy, Kotileipomo ja pitopalvelu Lempileivos, Luontoloma Lepänjuuri, Musiikkituotanto Keys, Retki- ja ohjelmapalvelu Maahisen Muki ja Mela, Sirkka Experience, Innoste Oy, Käsityöpaja Kivitasku and RoppiLax.

When it comes to the main business area of the companies, fifteen of the companies named programme services as their main business area. Five of them gave accommodation services and seven banqueting services as their main business areas. Eight of the companies chose the option "other", which included activity based services, restaurant services, cruises, rehabilitation and health services, exercise, nature based programme, Kalevala, Finnish mythology and architecture and local food. It was possible to choose many options.

Most of the companies were small with thirteen of them having only one to three employees. Companies larger than that had six, eighteen, thirty or 200 employees

11.2 Recommendations for the commissioner

There are four companies that fulfilled all the criteria: Rhea Shipline Oy, Kievari Rantapirtti, Erä's Pete and Kylpylähotelli Peurunka. There were also other companies that fulfilled most of the criteria and are seen as potential co-operators for the commissioner. They are described later. The four companies that fulfilled all the criteria are introduced here in more detail. The reasoning behind the choices is explained and recommendations are given for the commissioner about possible programme options.

Kievari rantapirtti

Kievari Rantapirtti is located in Koskenpää by Salosvesi, 54 kilometres from Jyväskylä in a beautiful country scene. It is a place to arrange festivities and business meetings as well as accommodate visitors.

Kievari Rantapirtti would be an ideal place to organise a congress dinner as well as different programme based days or evenings. Kievari rantapirtti can organise a dinner for up to 1000 people. This is an advantage, because there are not so many places that serve a very big congress group. Their menus are professional and affordable. The menus have clearly Finnish characteristics and typical Finnish ingredients. Kievari Rantapirtti organises theme dinners that author would recommend as an option for a traditional congress dinner.

There are a lot of different programme services arranged by the company. For example rally, fishing, paddling, climbing, sliding with cable wire, church boat (large wooden longboat) tours, Frisbee golf and husky safari would be suitable programmes for a congress. Cultural options are programmes with music and theatre and a trip to Vanha kirkko (Old Church). They say that programmes are always planned with the customer, which is important when it comes to congresses.

Based on the survey results, Kievari rantapirtti is recommended as a partner for Confedent International because, according to the survey, they have a wide experience of arranging programme services and they have especial experience of international groups. The company also gives a very professional impression of their operations.

Erä's Pete

Erä's Pete is a company specialized in producing programme services. Its main location in Kärkkäälä Hankasalmi, about 65 kilometres from Jyväskylä, makes it a good location for social programme arranged for congresses of Jyväskylä. Erä's Pete offers many alternative programmes suitable for congresses purposes.

Erä's Pete has fishing trips of a few hours in Rautalampi waterway including different types of fishing options: spinning and fly fishing packages in the rapids and lakes, trolling, torch fishing in the autumn, ice fishing during the winter months, angling, different types of fishing competitions and courses, as well as fishing with a seine. Fishing would be an exotic experience for most of international congress guests.

In addition to fishing, Erä's Pete has canoeing programmes from easy lake canoeing to rapid tracks with Indian canoes. These a few hour long trips would be ideal for congress participants.

During summer months Erä's Pete organises a boat trip to explore pre historical sights in and around Kärkkäälä, for example Lapping ruins and a mountain side with old paintings and writing. This programme would offer history, unique experiences and something very memorable for the participants.

Erä's Pete is recommended as a partner for Confedent International, because they have well planned and clear programme packages which can be altered according to the needs of the customer. Also, additional services, for example meals, can be arranged with cooperators. Their programme services are said to be of excellent quality. A programme that they recommend is rather for an international congress group than for a Finnish one. Their programme can be performed in English and they also have a website in English. A clear advantage that Erä's Pete has is that they can take up to 200 people at the same time as congress groups are usually of that size. Their survey results and their website give a professional image of the company.

Kylpylähotelli Peurunka

Peurunka is a versatile Spa hotel with holiday, recreation and congress services.

They offer a wide variety of programme services that would be good for congresses, like white water rafting, Frisbee golf, fishing, rally rides and floating the rapids to name but a few. They also have wide variety of restaurant services.

Peurunka is recommended as a cooperator for Confedent International based on the survey results because they have a wide variety of services to choose from. They also plan the services individually for customers. Peurunka has the clear advantage that they have a lot of capacity and therefore the possibility arrange programme for a very large congress group. Usually it is difficult to find a suitable location for a dinner if the congress has more than thousand people. Peurunka is the solution in that case.

Peurunka has also modern premises that are of good quality and give great impression for the participants.

Peurunka can offer the programme in English and they have experience of international groups.

Rhea Ship Line Oy

Rhea Ship Line Oy arranges cruises in the lake of Päijänne with Rantalaiva m/s Rhea. They have cultural cruises, cruises with a band and theme cruises.

Rhea Shipline Oy is recommended as a cooperator for the commissioner. The maximum group size for them is 200 people, which is suitable for congresses' purpose. They also have a lot of experience of international groups and they recommend the programme rather for international guests than for Finnish ones. They also evaluate their premises as excellent quality, which is important when thinking about the impression that the participants get based on the programme. The company operates clearly in a professional manner and gives a good impression of their services.

The congress programme with m/s Rhea could be an evening programme with a dinner served on board with a theme that is suitable for the congress. International congress participants would be impressed because they can enjoy the beautiful Finnish lake scenery.

12 Comments for the respondents

In this chapter each company and their products are described in short. They are also given recommendations on how they could improve their services in the future if they want to arrange programme for congresses.

The complete documented survey results are handed separately only for the commissioner. They include the survey results of each company individually.

RoppiLax

RoppiLax is a company specialized in local food and programme services. The survey results gave an impression that the target market for the company are smaller groups and mainly Finnish customers. Based on the survey results RoppiLax is advised to increase the capacity so that they could serve also bigger groups if they want to be social programme providers for congresses. The quality of the toilets should also be paid attention, because they are important when it comes to the impression that the guest gets from the premises. The programme items themselves, white water rafting, makasiinikirkko(a type of church) and local food are suitable for congress groups but maybe they could be developed into more clear programme packages for international groups.

Käsityöpaja Kivitasku (Handicraft workshop)

Käsityöpaja Kivitasku offers meeting and banqueting services as well as programme services. The main themes related to programmes are Kalevala and Finnish

mythology. Based on the survey the programme is very unique and suitable for international congress quests. The surroundings would be suitable for spending a congress evening. The reason that the company did not meet all the requirements was that they could offer the service for a group of 40 people. As congress groups are usually bigger than 200 people recommendation for the company is to think if they could make the programme possible for a bigger group.

Innoste Oy

Innoste Oy offers fishing excursions and cruises in Laukaa. Fishing and experiencing the Finnish lake scenery would be good social programme activities for a congress group. The congress groups are usually more than 200 people and therefore recommendation for the company is to consider if they could do the service for a bigger group. In case of a fishing excursion it is not necessary that the whole group takes part and a group size of 45 people is possible. The company should also pay attention to the toilet facilities so that they would be suitable for international quests.

Musiikkituotanto Keys (Music producer)

Musiikkituotanto Keys is specialized in interactive musical programme. They say that the programme is more suitable for Finnish group, which was the impression that was received from the survey also. If the company wants to arrange programme for congresses, Finnish or international, they should plan a programme package specially for congresses. The programme should be possible to realize with 200 people. Their programme could be a part of a congress evening programme.

Sirkka Experience

Sirkka Experience is a programme service provider. They arrange programmes such as excursions in the nature, paddling, hiking and nature photography. Their nature related programmes are suitable for an international congress group. As the congress schedules are tight, the company is proposed to plan shorter programme packages. The suitable duration would be 5 hours at most. Also the toilet facilities are something that the quests and organisers pay attention to and the company should improve their quality.

Retki- ja ohjelmapalvelu Maahisen Muki ja Mela (Excursions and programme services)

Retki- ja ohjelmapalvelu Maahisen Muki ja Mela is a company specialized in producing activities in the nature, for example a guided paddling trip to national park of Leivonmäki with coffee or dinner enjoyed in the nature. They offer also banqueting services. If they want to arrange social programme for a congress, they have to be able to provide the participants with the equipment and clothes that are needed in the programme. All the congress participants cannot be expected to have the proper clothes for the programmes realized in the nature. When it comes to dinner offered for a whole congress group, the size of the group is usually at least 200 people. The company is advised to consider if they can offer their services for a bigger group.

Luontoloma Lepänjuuri (holiday services in the wilderness)

Luontoloma Lepänjuuri offers guided tours to the nature and a show about making pontikka. Biodiversity and protection of the natural area are their mission. They hope

for Finnish groups, although a translator can be used. The group sizes are a bit too small for a congresses purpose and the suggestion is that the company would consider if they could increase their capacity. The use of translator is a good idea, because the programme would be more suitable for an international congress group than for a Finnish one.

Simulaattorimaailma (Virtual world)

Simulaattorimaailma provides programme related to motor sports, for example rally simulators and a real rally ride. As Jyväskylä is known for rally, the place would be interesting to show for congress guests. The type of the congress should be thought carefully and the programme would probably be suitable for male participants. As the company does not have a lot of experience of international groups, the recommendation for them is to plan a programme entity for an international congress group.

Kotileipomo ja pitopalvelu Lempileivos (Home bakery and caterer)

Kotileipomo ja pitopalvelu Lempileivos is specialized in producing homemade rural cooking from local ingredients. They offer dinner services and sauna. The place is suitable for a congress group of 150 people and the advice for them is to increase the capacity if possible so that they could accommodate also a bigger group.

Elämysten ja ystävyiden kartano (Manorhouse of friendship and experiences)

Elämysten ja ystävyiden kartano offers programme services, for example a riding trip with islandic horses, church boats, hiking, adventure tracks and smoke sauna. The programmes are good for international quests and it is good that the company has experience of serving international groups. If the company wants to arrange programme for a congress, the group sizes have to be bigger than 15 people. The suggestion is that they think if they could for example arrange alternative programmes at the same time so that the participants could be divided into groups.

Kartanoravintola Hankala (Manorhouse restaurant)

The company offers banqueting and programme services. They say that they can arrange a dinner for a group of 60 people. As congress groups are more than 200 people, the advice is that the company considers if they can increase their capacity. They have outside premises for a hundred people and maybe it is possible to use then during summertime so that the dinner could be served for more people.

Erä Pohjola (Game safaris)

Erä Pohjola offers activities in the nature. Fishing, hunting, guided tours to nature and meditation. Based on the survey, the impression was that the services are targeted for smaller groups than a congress group. The minimum group size for this type of programme in a social programme of a congress is about 30 people. The company could think about if they could arrange the services for a bigger group.

Killerin liikuntakeskus (Sports centre)

Killerin liikuntakeskus is a company offering different kinds of sport activities like ballgames and other group activities. The services that they have at the moment are not suitable for congresses purposes. If they want to organise programme for a congress they could plan specific programme for congresses like outdoors activities or games.

Kokemuskauppa Oy

Kokemuskauppa Oy offers different kinds of programme services. Their alternatives are for instance paddling, trip to nature, dance performances, Djembe-workshop, rally ride and hot-air balloon ride. It is good that they have different programme options than most companies. Hot-air balloon rides cannot be planned for a congress, though, because they are depending on weather. A congress programme cannot be rescheduled. According to their website, the programme options are somewhat too expensive for most of the congresses. In case of a big group, costs should be less per person.

Tavinsulka Oy

Tavinsulka oy offers paddling trips in the nature. It is good that the company has experience of international groups and can perform the programme in several languages. It is also an advantage that they can have a group of 80 people. Based on the survey, they would be a good candidate to cooperate with the commissioner. The recommendation is that they pay attention to the condition of the toilet premises as it is something the congress organiser notices.

13 Discussion

The survey results are discussed in this chapter and the most important findings are introduced. At the moment, the situation in Jyväskylä concerning the availability of social programmes is discussed. There will also be suggestion given about which kinds of companies should be founded in the Jyväskylä area in the future so that they would better respond to the need of congresses.

In the survey, as many as 254 companies were found to be operating in the field of meeting and banqueting services, rural tourism and programme services in the Jyväskylä and surrounding area. The number of companies was more than expected in the beginning of the study. The survey was sent to all of these companies, 19 of which replied with the response rate being 7,5 per cent. The response rate was considered quite low. The reasons may be that the congress customers are not the ones that the companies in question want to target. Instead, they are focused on leisure travellers. Another reason could be that the survey was sent to companies that do not fulfill the criteria and therefore chose not to reply. There was also only two weeks' time to reply, which may have lowered the reply rate.

There was a wide variety of services offered by the companies that responded to the questionnaire. Nature based activities were the most frequent. They included e.g. hiking, paddling and white water rafting. This result is probably based on the characteristics of the area of central Finland with a lot of forests and lakes and rapids. It is positive from the congress perspective that there are nature so many based programmes to be found because nature based programmes are suitable to an international congress group. The Finnish nature is exotic for most congress participants coming from abroad.

According to the survey, there were not many companies offering cultural programmes in the Jyväskylä area. It can be assumed that there is a demand for products that show Finnish culture, traditions and history. Also, no programme built around the contemporary life of Finnish people was not found. It would possibly be something that congress organisers would like to use in their congresses. There could also be more companies offering theatre or musical performances targeted to international audiences.

The most common problem among the respondents was lack of capacity. The companies were not aware of the size of the congress groups. There were companies that could arrange programme services for about 15 people or less, which is too little for congresses purposes. Also, the banqueting services could be arranged often for less than 100 people, which makes them too moderate for congress groups usually of 200-300 people. There is room in the Jyväskylä area for companies that could serve bigger groups. For most of the companies, however, it can be very difficult to increase their capacity, because they have only from one to two employees, and the size of the premises is limited.

Based on the survey results, most of the companies did not have a lot of experience in serving international groups. Most of the companies replied that they had had international groups 1-5 times during the last year. It seems, however, that there is a lot of interest in international groups as nine out of seventeen respondents thought that their programme was more suitable to an international group. Also, sixteen out of seventeen companies said that their programme could be performed in English.

The results also show that there are many companies that can also offer programme services to a bigger group, which was more than expected before the study. There were five companies that can serve a group of over 200 people at the same time. Two

of the companies could take a group of thousand people. Most companies gave thirty to seventy people as their maximum group size.

What was also lacking in many of the companies was a clear theme around which the programme could be built. Now the companies offer many separate programmes such as hiking and horseback riding. It could be a specific product for example that the theme is built around. All the items in the programme package, e.g. food should be planned according to the theme.

In the author's opinion, the thesis gave good results. A good understanding was achieved of the programme and banqueting services offered in the Jyväskylä area at the moment.

The results are beneficial to the organisers of congresses in Jyväskylä in the future. The commissioner was given the individual survey results of each of the companies that took part in the survey and they can use the information when planning the future congresses. The author hopes that the products and companies recommended to the commissioner will be used in future congresses.

It seems that there were many programme service companies that became interested in the congress business due to the survey, and that they will develop their services in the future resulting in more programme options for future congresses in Jyväskylä.

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15 Appendixes

1. A list of interview questions for the interviews of congress business professionals
2. Questions for the company survey
3. Cover letter for the company survey

Kysymyslomake

Tietoja haastateltavasta

1. Mikä on toimenkuvasi?
2. Kauanko olet ollut kongressialalla?

Kongressin vapaa-ajanohjelma

3. Millaisia vaatimuksia asetatte kansainvälisten kongressien ohjelmapaikalle?(Etäisyys?Laatu?)
4. Jos on tarjolla kilpailevia palveluja, minkä kriteerin /kriteerien pohjalta teette lopullisen ostopäätöksen?
5. Missä budjettiraameissa ohjelmapalvelut yleensä ovat?
6. Milloin on kongressien järjestämisen sesonkiaika ja miten ajankohta otetaan huomioon oheispalveluja suunniteltaessa?
7. Mitä ovat oheisohjelmalle asetetut vaatimukset? (Kesto? Mikä on vähimmäis- ja enimmäismäärä osallistujia?)
8. Millaisin ovat oheisohjelman sisällölle asetetut tavoitteet? (Luovaa? Mieleenpainuvaa?Mahdollisuus sosiaaliseen kanssakäymiseen? Näyttää paikallista kulttuuria? Näyttää turistiaktiviteetteja?)
9. Miten asiakkaan tilaisuuden arvot ja tavoitteet vaikuttavat oheisohjelmien valintaan?
10. Millaisia erityisvaatimuksia on koskien kansainvälisiä kongresseja? (Opastuskieli? Kokemusta monikulttuuristen ryhmien opastuksesta? Muuttaa ohjelma ryhmälle sopivaksi? Voiko ohjelma olla liian eksoottista? Näyttää suomalaista kulttuuria? Onko laatuvaatimukset samat kuin suomalaisille kongresseille?)
- 11.Voitteko mainita oheisohjelmia, jotka ovat ylittäneet asiakkaidenne odotukset?

Kysymyksiä yrityksille

Perustiedot:

1. Yrityksen nimi
2. Yhteyshenkilön nimi
3. Puhelinnumero
4. Osoite
5. Sähköpostiosoite
6. Yrityksen kotisivut

Tutkimuskysymykset:

7. Yrityksen tärkeimmät arvot: Millaisen mielikuvan haluatte yrityksestänne luoda asiakkaalle? Luettele kolme tärkeintä arvoa.

8. Kuinka monta työntekijää yrityksellänne on?

9. Kuinka kaukana ohjelmapaikka sijaitsee Jyväskylän keskustasta kilometreissä?

10. Kuinka kauan matka kestää linja-autolla Jyväskylän keskustasta ohjelmapaikalle?

11. Mikä on yrityksenne päätoimiala?

- Ohjelmapalvelut
- majoituspalvelut
- kokous- ja juhlapalvelut
- muu, mikä?

12. Onko tiloissanne ravintolasali?

13. Jos on niin kuinka monelle hengelle?

14. Miten arvioisitte ravintolasalin laatua asteikolla 1-5?

15. Onko tiloissanne sauna?

16. Jos on niin kuinka monelle hengelle?

17. Miten arvioisitte saunan laatua asteikolla 1-5?

18. Onko käytössänne ulkotilat?

19. Jos on niin kuinka monelle hengelle?

20. Miten arvioisitte ulkotilojenne laatua asteikolla 1-5?

22. Kuinka monelle hengelle tiloissanne on naisten- ja miestenhuone?

23. Miten arvioisitte tilojen laatua asteikolla 1-5?

24. Tarjoatteko ravitsemispalveluita? Millaisia?

- Kahvitilaisuus
- Illallinen

26. Kuinka monelle hengelle korkeintaan voitte tarjota kyseiset palvelut?

27. Soveltuvatko tilanne parhaiten pöytiintarjoilu- seisovapöytä- vai cocktail-tyyppiseen tilaisuuteen?

28. Onko yrityksellänne anniskeluoikeudet?

29. Kuinka paljon illallisellenne tulee hintaa per henkilö? Vähintään?Korkeintaan?
30. Voisitteko mainita esimerkin mahdollisesta menusta?

Seuraavat kysymykset koskevat ohjelmapalveluita. Jos yrityksenne ei järjestä ohjelmapalveluita, siirtykää kohtaan....

31. Millaisia ohjelmapalveluita yrityksenne tarjoaa?
- Luontoaktiviteetteja, mitä?
 - Kulttuurillista ohjelmaa, mitä?
 - Ohjelmalliset ruokailut, mitä?
 - Liikunnallista ohjelmaa, mitä?
 - Muuta, mitä?
32. Onko yrityksenne järjestänyt palveluita kansainvälisille ryhmille viimeisen vuoden aikana?
- Ei ole
 - 1-5 kertaa
 - kerran kuussa
 - kerran viikossa
 - muu, mikä?
33. Tarjoatteko kaikki ohjelmaan tarvittavat varusteet/vaatteet?
- Kyllä
 - Ei
34. Mihin aikaan vuodesta palvelunne on mahdollista järjestää?
- Kuukaudet
35. Kuinka monta tuntia ohjelmalle pitää varata aikaa?
36. Voidaanko ohjelmanne toteuttaa englannin kielellä?
37. Suosittelettekko palveluitanne mielummin suomalaiselle vai kansainväliselle ryhmälle?
38. Voisitteko kuvata suosituimman tuotteenne.
39. Kyseisen tuotteen hinta?
40. Kuinka suurelle ryhmälle olette tarjonneet palvelua korkeintaan?
41. Luetelkaa asiat miksi kansainvälisen kongressin osallistujan kannattaa tulla luoksenne?
42. Miten arvoioisitte ohjelmapalveluidenne laatua asteikolla 1-5?
43. Tähän voitte kertoa vapaasti lisätietoa palveluistanne. Ja liittää esimerkiksi kuvia tiloistanne.
44. Sallittekko yrityksenne mainittavan nimeltä opinnäytetyössä?

Arvoisa vastaanottaja,

Olen Jyväskylän ammattikorkeakoulun restonomi-opiskelija ja teen opinnäytetyötä, toimeksiantajanani Confedent International, Jyväskylässä toimiva kongressipalveluyritys (ent. Congreszon). Opinnäytetyöni tarkoituksena on löytää Confedent Internationalille uusia yhteistyökumppaneita järjestämään kogresseihin vapaa-ajanohjelmaa Jyväskylän seudulla. Lisäksi työni tarkoituksena on kartoittaa Jyväskylän alueen ohjelma- ja juhlapalveluyritysten valmiuksia tilaisuuden järjestämiseen kogresseihin ja erityisesti kansainvälisiin kogresseihin.

Jyväskylään saapui vuonna 2009 yli 3600 osallistujaa kansainvälisiin kongresseihin eri puolilta maailmaa. Lisäksi kaupungissa järjestettiin lukuisin suomalaisia usean sadan ja jopa tuhannen hengen kongresseja ja kokouksia. Tieteellisen ohjelman lisäksi, kongressiin kuuluu erilaisia vapaa-ajan tilaisuuksia kongressivieraille mm. illallisia ja erilaisia ohjelmakokonaisuuksia.

Pyydän Teitä ystävällisesti vastaamaan liitteenä olevaan kyselyyn mikäli yrityksenne on kiinnostunut tarjoamaan palveluitaan kongressien tarpeisiin. Kyselyn tulokset ja yhteystietonne luovutetaan Confedent Internationalille tulevaisuuden yhteistyötä varten. Jos niin haluatte, yritystänne ei mainita nimeltä opinnäytetyössäni.

Pyydän vastausta 20.7 mennessä.

Kiitos vaivannäöstänne jo etukäteen.

Ystävällisin terveisin

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